

T H E

Christian History;

Containing Accounts of the Propagation and Revival
of Religion in *Great Britain, America, &c.*

Saturday J A N U A R Y 26. 1744,5 § N°. 100.

*Accounts of the Revival of Religion in Boston,
continued.*

BUT after all our Endeavours, both our Security and Degeneracy seem'd in general to grow, 'till the *Night after the Lord's-Day Octob. 29. 1727*; when the glorious GOD arose and fearfully shook the Earth through all these Countries. By terrible Things in Righteousness he began to answer us, as the GOD of our Salvation.

On the *next Morning* a very full Assembly met at the *North Church* for the proper Exercises on so extraordinary an Occasion. At *Five* in the *Evening* a crowded Concourse assembled at the *Old Church*: And Multitudes unable to get in, immediately flow'd to the *South*, and in a few Minutes fill'd that also. At Lieutenant-Governor Dummer's Motion, who was then our Commander in Chief, the *Thursday* of the same Week was kept as a Day of *extraordinary Fasting and Prayer* in all the Churches in *Boston*; not meerly to intreat for sparing Mercy, but also to implore the Grace and Spirit of GOD to come down and help us to a sincere Repentance and returning to him. And as the Houses of public Worship were greatly crowded, the People were very attentive.

The *Ministers* endeavoured to set in with this extraordinary and awakening *Work of GOD* in Nature, and to preach his *Word* in the most awakening Manner; to show the People the vast Difference between *Conviction* and *Conversion*, between a forced Reformation either in *Acts of Piety, Justice, Charity, or Sobriety*, by the meer Power of Fear, and a genuine Change of the very Frame and Relish of the Heart by the supernatural Efficacy of the **HOLY SPIRIT**; to lead them

them on to true Conversion and unsceined Faith in CHRIST, and to guard them against deceiving themselves.

In all our Congregations, many seem'd to be awakened and reformed : And professing Repentance of their Sins and Faith in Christ, enter'd into solemn Covenant with God, and came into full Communion with our several Churches. In ours, within *eight Months* after, were about *Eighty* added to our *Communicants*. But then comparatively few of these applied to me to discourse about their Souls 'till they came to offer themselves to the Communion, or afterwards : The most of those who came to me seem'd to have passed through their Convictions before their coming to converse with me about approaching to the *Lord's Table* : tho' I doubt not but considerable Numbers were at that Time savingly converted.

However the Goodness of many seem'd as the Morning Cloud and early Dew which quickly passes away. A spiritual Slumber seem'd soon to seize the Generality ; even the wise as well as foolish Virgins. And tho' in 1729, the *SmallPox* came into Town and prevail'd again ; yet in a few Months left us, both unawakened, ungrateful, unreformed. The HOLY SPIRIT awfully withheld his Influence in convincing and converting Sinners, and enlivening others. In *three or four Years* we rather grew to a greater Declension than ever : And so alarm'd were the *Pastors* of the Town with the dismal View, that in the *Summer* of 1734, they agreed to propose another *Course of Days of Prayer & Fasting* among our several Congregations ; *To humble ourselves before God for our Unfruitfulness under the Means of Grace, and to ask the Effusion of his SPIRIT to revive the Power of Godliness among us* : which our People readily complied with and observed.

And tho' the sovereign GOD was pleased to give us now and then a Sprinkling, for which his Name be praised ; yet the parching Drought continued, and he made us wait for a larger Effusion.

In this Year the terrible *Throat-Distemper* broke out and spread among the Youth in the *easterly Parts* of this Country, and destroyed Multitudes. In some Towns it cut off almost all the *Children*. The next Year came into *Boston*, and began to destroy & strike us with a general Awe : but gently treated us, and the next Year left us ; to melt our Hearts into gratitude.

grateful Repentance. And yet we generally seem'd to grow more stupid and hard than ever.

About this Time indeed, viz. 1735, there was a most remarkable *Revival of Religion* in the *westerly Parts* of the Country: Not only at *Northampton*, but also in about *twelve* other Congregations in the *County of Hampshire*, and in about *fourteen* others in the neighbouring *Colony of Connecticut*. And the solemn Rumour of that surprizing Work of God resounding through the Country, was a special Means of exciting great Thoughtfulness of Heart in many irreligious People; and great Joy in others, both in the View of what the mighty Power and Grace of God had wrought, and in the hopeful Prospect that this blessed Work begun would go on and spread throughout the Land. And as this excited the *extraordinary Prayers* of many; so it seem'd to prepare the Way in divers Places for that *more extensive Revival of Religion* which in *five Years* after followed. But in the mean while the general Decay of Piety seem'd to increase among us in *Boston*. And for the Congregation I preach to; tho' for *several Years* some few offer'd themselves to our Communion, yet but few came to me in Concern about their Souls before. And so I perceive it was in others: And I remember some of the Ministers were wont to express themselves as greatly discouraged with the growing Declension both in Principle and Practice, especially among the *rising Generation*. From the Year 1738, we had receiv'd Accounts of the Rev. Mr. *Whitefield*, as a very pious young Minister of the Church of *England*, rising up in the Spirit of the *Reformers*, and preaching their *Doctrines* first in *England* and then in *America*, with surprizing Power and Success: which rais'd Desires in great Numbers among us to see and hear him. And having receiv'd Invitations to come hither; he from *Georgia* and *South-Carolina* arrived at *Rhode-Island* on Lord's Day, Sept. 14. 1740, and the Thursday Evening after came to *Boston*.

Next Day in the Afternoon Dr. *Sewall* & I made him a Visit: found several Ministers and other Gentlemen of the Town with him, and that Dr. *Colman* and Mr. *Cooper* had engag'd him to preach this Afternoon in their House of public Worship: and in about an Hour we went to the Place which quickly crowded with two or three Thousand People. He began with a short and fervent Prayer: and after singing, took his Text from *John xvii. 2.* Gave us a plain, weighty

regular Discourse : representing that all our Learning and Morality will never save us ; and without an experimental Knowledge of GOD in CHRIST we must perish in Hell for ever.---He spake as became the Oracles of GOD in Demonstration of the Spirit and of Power. And especially when he came to his Application, he address'd himself to the Audience in such a tender, earnest and moving Manner, exciting us to come and be acquainted with the dear REDEEMER, as melted the Assembly into Tears.

Next Morning, at Dr. Sewall's & my Desire, he preach'd at the South Church, to further Acceptance.

He spake with a mighty Sense of GOD, Eternity, the Immortality and Preciousness of the Souls of his Hearers, of their original Corruption, and of the extreme Danger the unregenerate are in ; with the Nature and absolute Necessity of Regeneration by the HOLY GHOST ; and of believing in CHRIST, in order to our Pardon, Justification, yeilding an acceptable Obedience and obtaining Salvation from Hell and an Entrance into Heaven. His Doctrine was plainly that of the Reformers : Declaring against putting our good Works or Morality in the Room of Christ's Righteousness, or their having any Hand in our Justification, or being indeed pleasing to GOD while we are totally unsanctified, acting from corrupt Principles, and unreconciled Enemies to him : Which occasion'd some to Mistake him as if he oppos'd Morality. But he insisted on it, that the Tree of the Heart is by original Sin exceedingly corrupted, and must be made good by Regeneration, that so the Fruits proceeding from it may be good likewise : that where the Heart is renewed, it ought and will be careful to maintain good Works ; that if any be not habitually so careful, who think themselves renewed, they deceive their own Souls : and even the most improv'd in Holiness, as well as others, must intirely depend on the Righteousness of Christ for the Acceptance of their Persons and Services. And tho' now and then he dropped some Expressions that were not so accurate and guarded as we shou'd expect from aged and long studied Ministers ; yet I had the Satisfaction to observe his Readiness with great Modesty and Thankfulness to receive Correction as soon as offered.

In short, he was a most importunate Wooer of Souls to come to CHRIST for the Enjoyment of him, and all his Benefits.

Benefits. He distinctly applied his Exhortations to the *elderly People, the Middle-aged, the Young, the Indians and Negroes*; and had a most winning Way of addressing them. He affectionately pray'd for our Magistrates, Ministers, Colleges Candidates for the Ministry, and Churches as well People in general: and before he left us he in a public & moving Manner observ'd to the People, how sorry he was to hear that the religious Assemblies, especially on *Lectures*, had been so thin, exhorted them earnestly to a more general Attendance on our publick Ministrations for the Time to come, & told them how glad he should be to hear of the same.

Multitudes were greatly affected and many awakened with his lively Ministry. Tho' he preached *every Day* the Houses were exceedingly crowded: but when he preached in the Common, a vaster Number attended: And almost every Evening the House where he lodg'd was thronged, to hear his Prayers and Counsels.

Upon Invitation he also preached in several neighbouring Towns; travelled and preached as far as *York*, above *seventy Miles* northeast of *Boston*; returned hither; gave us his farewell affectionate Sermon Lord's-Day Evening Octob. 12. Next Morning left us; travelled Westward to *Northampton*; thence thro' *Connecticut, New-York* and *New-Jersey* to *Philadelphia*, and thence sailed to *South-Carolina*. And as far as I could then see or learn, he parted in the general Esteem and Love both of Ministers and People: And this seem'd to continue 'till the *Journal* of his Travels in *New-England* came abroad, wherein some Passages offended many, & occasioned their Reflections on him.

But upon Mr. *Whitefield's* leaving us, great Numbers in this Town were so happily concerned about their Souls, as we had never seen any Thing like it before, except at the Time of the general Earthquake: * And their Desires ex-

* Tho' People were *then* generally frighted and many awakened to such a Sense of their Duty as to offer themselves to our *Communion*; yet very few came to me *then* under deep Convictions of their *unconverted* and *lost* Condition, in Comparison of what came *now*. Nor did those who came to me *then*, come so much with the Enquiry, *What shall we do to be saved*, as to signify they had such a Sense of their Duty to come to the *Lord's Table* that they dare not stay away any longer. cited

cited to hear their Ministers more than ever : So that our Assemblies both on *Lectures* and *Sabbaths* were surprizingly increased, and now the People wanted to hear us oftener. In Consideration of which a public *Lecture* was proposed to be set up at Dr. Colman's Church, near the midst of the Town, on every *Tuesday Evening*.

Lord's-Day Afternoon Oct. 10, public Notice was there given of the proposed *Lecture* to be on the *Tuesday-Evening* following : which the religious People in general receiv'd with so much Joy, that when the Evening came, the House seem'd to be crowded as much as if Mr. Whitefield was there. It was the first stated Evening Lecture in these Parts of the World : And the venerable Dr. Colman began it with a most suitable and moving Sermon ; forthwith printed. The Title whereof is this :

- Souls flying to JESUS CHRIST pleasant and admirable
- to behold : A Sermon preach'd at the opening an *Evening*
- *Lecture* in Brattle-Street Boston, Tuesday October 21. 1740 :
- By Dr. Colman : To a very crowded Audience : And
- printed at the Desire of many.'

And thus the Dr. began the Sermon ---

Isai. LX. 8. Who are these that fly as a Cloud, and as the Doves to their Windows ?

- It is a pleasant and wondrous Thing, to see Souls flying
- to JESUS CHRIST, to the Means of Grace and Salvation
- which he has ordained and sanctified, and into his Church.
- If this were not the proper and natural Sense of the Pro-
- phet's Words, I would not have chose them for the Open-
- ing the present *Lecture*.

- Our dear People, Your Ministers have with Pleasure
- seen you in the Weeks past, Old and Young, Parents and
- Children, Masters and Servants, High and Low, Rich and
- Poor together, gathering and passing as *Clouds* in our
- Streets, and as *Doves* on the Wing in Flocks flying to the
- Doors and Windows of our Places of Worship ; and ho-
- vering about the same, those that could not get in.

- The *Fame* of a singular fervent and holy Youth, and ex-
- traordinary Servant and Minister of JESUS CHRIST,
- (who makes his *Angels Spirit*, and his *Ministers a Flame of Fire*) had prepar'd you for his *Visit* ; and with raised Ex-
- pectations we receiv'd him, even as an *Angel of God* for

JESUS

• JESUS sake ; as the Apostle St. Paul was received by the
• Churches in *Galatia*.

• God gave him a wondrous Manner of Entrance among
• us, just as in other Places before us, among the Brethren
• of our Denomination ; and we were sometimes melted to-
• gether in Tears, Ministers and People, Parents and Chil-
• dren, under the commanding Addresses of Love to his
• Saviour and our Souls. We led you with a visible Pleasure
• in our Faces to the solemn and great Assemblies, and look'd
• on You there with great Satisfaction, in your uncommon
• Regards to the beloved Servant of CHRIST, for the
• Truth's sake that dwelleth in him, and the Love of the Spirit
• filling him, and reigning in his Ministrations to us.

• And now our beloved Brethren and Sisters, You and
• your Children, we are going to prove, confirm and increase,
• by the Will of GOD, the seeming good Dispositions begun
• or revived in You, toward CHRIST and his Word, in a
• just and reasonable pious Care and Solicitude for your
• Salvation.

• Mr. Whitefield once and again in his Admonitions to
• You, and also in his fervent, righteous and effectual Pray-
• ers for you (by the Will of GOD) led you unto this Trial
• and Proof of your selves ; --- " Whether when he was
• gone from us, you wou'd better attend on the Ministry of
• your own Pastors, both on Sabbaths and Lectures ? For
• he had heard (and it was but too true) that there had been
• a very great Defect in this Point among you before he
• came.--Some of your Ministers therefore now make a new
• Tender of themselves to you, in the Fear and Love of GOD,
• in this new Lecture, for the Service of your Souls, if you
• will encourage them by something of a like Attendance
• on it, as we have lately seen you give to the Word preach'd.
• ---We preach the same CHRIST, the same Doctrines of
• Grace, and according to Godliness, with the same Gospel
• Motives and Arguments, Applications to Conscience, and
• Supplications to GOD for You.--We would look on the
• Fields, and behold them white for the Harvest, and desire
• to enter into it ; if by the Help of GOD we may cherish the
• Impressions made on any of your Souls, and carry them
• on, clinching the Nails driven by the Master of Assemblies
• that has been sent among us.--For though we are Elder
• Ministers, and have been many Years before him in the

• Service

‘ Service of Souls, and *He like David going against Goliath,*
 ‘ in the Sight of the *Armies of Israel,* has been seen to be but
 ‘ a *Youth & Stripling;* yet are we not unwilling or ashamed
 ‘ to come and serve after *Him,* in the *Battles of our Lord,*
 ‘ and in the *Victories of his Grace.*-- You have seen, as it
 ‘ were, a young *Elias,* or the *Baptist* risen again, a *burning*
 ‘ *and a shining Light,* and you were willing for the *Season to*
 ‘ *rejoice in his Light and Heat:* May we now preach and you
 ‘ hear for the future with more Life & Spirit, Diligence and
 ‘ Constancy; and by the Will of God with new Success----
 ‘ But we mean not, *Brethren,* at this *Lecture* only, but on
 ‘ *every Sabbath and every Lecture* in the Town; and more
 ‘ particularly on the public *Thursday Lecture;* which has
 ‘ been shamefully neglected by the Town.

‘ To come then to my *Text,* which I acknowledge the
 ‘ late *Concourse to the Word* among us, has led me to chuse.
 ‘ I wou’d now look round on the *present Assembly,* and look
 ‘ back on our *past Assemblies,* and say to You,----
 ‘ “Who are these that fly as a Cloud, and as the Doves to
 ‘ their Windows?”

The *Tuesday Evening* after, the Rev. Dr. *Sewall* preach’d the *Lecture* in the same Place; and the House was then also greatly crowded with attentive Hearers: and so it continued to be on these Lectures for many Months after.

Upon the Rev. Mr. *Gilbert Tennent’s* coming and preaching here, the People appear’d to be yet much more awaken’d about their Souls than before. He came, I think, on Saturday Dec. 13, this Year: Preach’d at the *New-North* on both the Parts of the following Day; as also on *Monday* in the Afternoon, when I first heard him, and there was a great Assembly.

He did not indeed at first come up to my Expectation; but afterwards exceeded it. In private Converse with him, I found him to be a Man of considerable Parts and Learning; free, gentle, condescending: and from his own various Experience, reading the most noted Writers on experimental Divinity, as well as the Scriptures, and conversing with many who had been awakened by his Ministry in *New-Jersey*, where he then lived; He seem’d to have as deep an Acquaintance with the experimental Part of Religion as any I have convers’d with; And his Preaching was as searching and rousing as ever I heard.

(To be continued.)